

British Birds. (Vol. vii. No. 1, 1913.)

The Condor. (Vol. xv. No. 2, 1913.)

The Emu. (Vol. xii. pt. 3 (Suppl.) & pt. 4, 1913.)

Irish Naturalist. (Vol. xxii. Nos. 4-6, 1913.)

Journal of the Federated Malay States Museums. (Vol. v. No. 1, Kuala Lumpur, 1913.)

Journal für Ornithologie. (Vol. lxi. Heft 2, April 1913.)

Messenger Ornithologique. (No. 1, Moscow, 1913.)

New York Zool. Soc. 17th Annual Report. (New York, 1913.)

Ornithologisches Jahrbuch. (Bd. xxiv. Heft. 1, 2, 1913.)

The Scottish Naturalist. (Nos. 17, 18, 1913.)

Zoologischer Anzeiger. (Bd. xli. Nr. 11-13; Bd. xlii. Nr. 1-4.)

XXVI.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notes.*

Mr. Bannerman's Expedition to the Canary Islands.—We have received the following letter from Mr. David A. Bannerman, who is at work on the less well-known islands of the Canary Group. He dates his letter from Haria, Lanzarote, on May 24th, 1913, and writes as follows:—

“So far I have had a most successful trip, and have got a good series of birds. I spent fifteen days in Fuerteventura, and worked round the north and centre of the island, making a wide detour to take in all the most likely places for birds. Needless to say, the island proved very interesting and to be more mountainous than I had expected to find. There is a central range which rises to about 2300 ft., and I passed over this at 1900 ft. between Santa Maria de Betancuria and Antigua, from which elevation I had a fine view of the immense plains which comprise the greater part of the island. The Bustard seems to be decidedly rare; I am afraid they have been sadly persecuted. I, however, had a good view of two pairs near Antigua. Mr. Meade-Waldo will be glad to hear that his Chat, *Pratincola dacotia*, seems to have decidedly increased its range, being no longer confined to the south-east.

“I met with them at Caldereta and Oliva in the north, at La Poña on the west coast, and at Antigua in the centre of

the island. Moreover, they were exceedingly numerous in one of these places, and young birds fully fledged were flying about with the adults. The Fuerteventura Owl (*Strix flammea gracilirostris* Hartert) is very uncommon. The natives all know the 'Leclusa,' but say that it is not found in the places which it used to frequent. I hear as much as £5 has been offered for a single bird by some collector, and if this is the case, it is not surprising that they are rare. Of course they are doubtless more common than they appear, as one cannot depend on procuring Owls in a journey as rapid as mine. The Black Oystercatcher was not at Toston—an ideal spot for it, but I expect to meet with it shortly. Waders were numerous on the reefs. Turnstones in beautiful breeding-plumage, Dunlin, Grey Plover, Ringed Plover, Whimbrel, Redshank, Godwit, and Kentish Plover, the latter in swarms and breeding. From Toston I went by sea to La Peña, and had a very adventurous landing on almost perpendicular cliffs, with a huge sea and a climb which proved very stiff for my wife. My second boat with the cargo capsized further down the coast, but eventually everything was rescued, and none of the birdskins got wet. The valley of La Peña proved my best collecting-ground, and seed-eating birds were here very numerous, especially the Sardinian Warbler (*Sylvia m. leucogastra*), which frequented the tamarisk-bushes. Most of the birds in this island are very early breeders, but I have taken some eggs of late broods. I made five base-camps, and we travelled about 80 miles, so that I have seen a very considerable part of the island. The bird collection from Fuerteventura numbers 123, besides which we have mammals, butterflies, plants, grasses, eggs, and reptiles, so if all goes well I hope to have a fair series by my return. I arrived in this island (Lanzarote) a week ago, landing at Tinosá, and went to the lake called Lago Januvio, situated on the south-western coast close to the sea—the most desolate place I have ever been in, the only birds seen being Berthelot's Pipits, Hoopoes, Shrikes, Coursers, and Thick-knees. I found a huge flock

of Turnstones on the shores of the lake itself and more Kentish Plovers breeding. The last day eight Grebes came in from the sea, and I watched them for a long time, but could not get at them ; they looked like the Eared Grebe. From here I went *via* Arreceife to Teguisse, and passed through very uninteresting country, utterly barren save for the corn which is grown in every possible place. I camped at Teguisse, and from there came on to this place—Haria (1100 feet)—a beautifully situated town in a most fertile valley teeming with birds. I have met with the Tit (*Parus c. degener*) for the first time in this island and also the Spectacled Warbler. I stay here three more days, and then intend to work all the small islands if I can land on them. It has been dreadfully rough at sea lately. I have just been informed that Herr von Thanner has been taken ill at Alegranza and been obliged to return, so that I shall not meet him as I had hoped. He had apparently only just arrived.

“I forgot to mention that I had shot two Pratincoles on the plain near Arreceife—a rare visitor to these shores, I believe.”

The return of Mr. Wollaston's New Guinea Expedition.—It was briefly announced in the last number of ‘The Ibis’ that Mr. A. F. R. Wollaston had succeeded in reaching the snow-line of Carstensz Peak at the end of February. Since then Mr. Wollaston has returned to England with Mr. Kloss and the collections, and has communicated the following brief report on his expedition :—

“The party consisted of Mr. C. B. Kloss, five Dyak collectors, and seventy-four Dyak carriers, with an escort, provided by the Dutch Government, of 130 men under the command of Lieut. Van de Water. We left Java on August 31, 1912, and arrived at the mouth of the Utakwa River on Sept. 18. In seven days all our stores were landed at our base-camp which was made about twenty miles

from the sea, and a fortnight later we proceeded further up the river in six canoes which had been made by the Dyaks. Two days' paddling brought us as far as it was possible to go by water, and there a second permanent camp (Canoe Camp) was established. At a distance of three days' march from the river a third permanent camp (Observation Camp) was made in the foot-hills at about 2500 feet, and the collectors were sent there as soon as possible. In the middle of December, when sufficient stores had been accumulated at Observation Camp, a preliminary excursion of six marches was made into the mountains, and at the end of the month two collectors were camped between 4000 and 5000 feet. On the 18th of January we left Observation Camp, and in six marches reached a place (Camp 9, about 6000 ft.) where some of the collectors remained for about a fortnight and obtained a valuable series of birds. From Camp 9 three marches brought us to a point (10,500 ft.) from which we were able to reach the snow of Mt. Carstensz in one day. Above an altitude of 6000 ft. animal life becomes very scanty, and, excepting occasional Parrots and small flocks of Lories, very few birds were seen. Pipit-like birds were seen about 9000 ft., a Dove and a Thrush between 13,000 and 14,000 ft., and the droppings of a game-bird, presumably the one found by Lorentz on Mt. Wilhelmina, were seen near our camp at 10,000 ft. Two collectors spent five days in a camp about 8000 ft., where they obtained several birds of great interest. The difficulty of carrying food into the mountains made it impossible to remain for a long period at a high altitude, and we were obliged to return to the Observation Camp on Feb. 10. Three collectors stayed at a camp between 5000 and 6000 ft. until the beginning of March, after which the whole expedition began to return to Canoe Camp and eventually to the base-camp. A Government steamer carried the expedition away on April 3, and on April 13 we left Amboina in the mail-steamer for Singapore. During the time that we were in the mountains we were almost constantly accompanied by some of the

native people who live between 4000 and 6000 ft. They were exceedingly friendly people, and were of the greatest assistance to us in shewing us their tracks through a very steep and difficult country. They are destitute of clothing, and their weapons are bows and arrows, stone axes, and stone knives. They cultivate sweet potatoes and a little tobacco and sugar-cane; they appear to be in some ways more intelligent than the coast people, with whom we had occasional trouble.

“In general the health of the expedition was very good, and we were fortunate in not having a single case of beri-beri, which was so serious a feature of the B.O.U. Expedition to the Mimika River.

“A more extended account of this expedition will be given in a future number of ‘The Ibis,’ when the descriptions of the new species of birds are published.—A. F. R. W.”

At the last Meeting of the British Ornithologists’ Club, held on Wednesday, June 11, the collection of bird-skins, numbering about 1300 in all, were exhibited; as they had only been unpacked on the day previous to the Meeting it was impossible to say how many were novelties, but in the current number of the ‘Bulletin’ of the Club five forms are characterized as new by Mr. Ogilvie-Grant.

In addition to the birds some 150 mammals, a large number of snakes and other reptiles, and several thousand insects were obtained, as well as a very extensive collection of ethnological objects, including about 50 specimens of the stone knives used by the natives in the regions visited by the expedition.

It is to be hoped that it may be possible to make arrangements for publishing a complete account of the scientific results of the two Dutch New Guinea expeditions in a series of volumes so as to form a permanent memorial of the undertaking. This it may perhaps be possible to effect by the co-operation of the British Ornithologists’ Union with other scientific bodies interested in the results other than ornithological.

Bird Protection in the United States.—The November-December number of 'Bird Lore' contains the Annual Report of the National Association of Audubon Societies for 1912. This organization not only coordinates and directs the work of the State Audubon Societies, which deal with the problems of the protection of birds in the individual States, suggesting legislation and endeavouring to compel observance of the laws when made, but also directly employs a number of wardens or guardians who have charge of the numerous state and federal reserves scattered chiefly along the eastern and southern coasts of the United States.

That the work is carried out on a large scale is evidenced by the accounts, which show that over £6000 has been expended during the year on Warden service, Legislation, and Educational efforts.

It is a matter for congratulation that these efforts have not been in vain, as can be seen from the various reports here printed, which show that Egrets and other birds formerly on the verge of extinction through the ravages of plume-hunters and others, are now rapidly recovering their numbers in reserves as well as in other colonies known to exist in the southern States from Texas to Florida.

Life-History of North American Birds.—A good many years ago the late Major Charles E. Bendire planned a work on the above subject in co-operation with the Smithsonian Institution. After the publication of two volumes, in which he dealt with the groups from the Gallinæ to the Icteridæ—the birds numbered 289 to 513 of the old edition of the A. O. U. Checklist—Major Bendire died leaving the work incomplete, though what was published contains a mass of most useful information not to be found elsewhere.

Mr. A. C. Bent made arrangements with the Smithsonian Institution in 1910 to complete Major Bendire's work, and has been amassing information for the last twenty years for

this purpose. He has travelled extensively over the greater part of Canada and the United States, from Labrador to Alaska and from California to Florida, collecting information and making observations, and he now appeals to American ornithologists in a circular, of which a copy has been sent to us, to assist him.

He proposes first of all to issue a volume containing the Life-Histories of the Anatidæ, and if any of our readers can supply him with first hand observations on such points as Migration, Mating, Nesting-habits, Plumage-sequence, Molt, Food and Flight-habits he will be very grateful.

All correspondence should be addressed to Mr. A. C. Bent, Taunton, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

'The Emu' in London.—Messrs. Witherby & Co. have been appointed European agents for *'The Emu,'* the organ of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union, and copies of that publication can now be obtained at 326 High Holborn, W.C.